

THE  
DESIGN, IMPORTANCE AND VALIDITY

OF

INFANT BAPTISM:

ALSO,

A FEW THOUGHTS

ON THE

Mode of Administering that Ordinance.

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## PREFACE.

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IN the following remarks our object is not to establish a sectarian point of theology, nor to wage war with those who may differ with us in opinion. If we do not love one another on earth, we shall never be permitted to dwell together in Heaven, where all are one—one family—one in heart—indissolubly one.

Our motive is first—*truth*—that we may know what is *truth*. Secondly, to advocate the cause of our children, who are not only innocent, and dear to every parent's heart, but are dear to Christ also, while they are unable to plead their own cause. If, therefore, the reader of this pamphlet be a parent, we will compel him to pray for our success—that we may establish the rights of his children; for, however strong and unreasonable our sectarian prejudices may be, a parent's love is stronger, and should raise us above those contracted views which too often separate brethren, and darken the atmosphere where all should be light and love.

J. H.

nance, or the door into Christ's visible church ; but if this be a correct view of the subject, the wisdom and importance of the ordinance does not appear. Many profess to be in Christ's church, who are accredited and respectable members, and yet they have not been baptized. It would be a very uncharitable act to unchristianize our Quaker friends because they do not believe water baptism to be binding on them. If, indeed, baptism is the *door into the church*, and a member who had been regularly received at this door, was afterwards to be expelled from the bosom of the church for immoral conduct ; subsequently, should he reform, repent and be again restored to the favor of God, before he is again received into the church, he must be rebaptized, or he cannot enter in at *the door*, he must climb up some other way. This we cannot believe, because we have no scripture authority for such a course. Baptism cannot correctly be considered the door into the *church*, because it would discover an incongruity, a discrepancy in the plan of salvation, which cannot be the case, if God is its author. If children are received into the *church* by baptism, they are not treated as members—they are not expelled for immoral conduct, nor do we administer to them the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and invariably after a profession of conversion made by our children, we receive them formally into the church. As discord can no more exist in the work of redemption than

it can in the work of creation, we conclude that the design of water baptism is not to introduce members, adults or children, into the visible *Church of Christ*.

But when we say, and believe that water baptism is an initiatory rite, that it is the door, and the *only legal door* into Christ's *kingdom on earth*, we discover a wise and salutary design in the ordinance, worthy of its author. In this view of the subject every thing harmonizes, apostate man and his degraded offspring is elevated, and God's government and character is honored.

The term the *kingdom of God* in the New Testament, has different significations. It sometimes refers to Heaven—the unveiled presence of God—of which it is said, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Again, it implies pure and undefiled religion—this kingdom is said to be *within you*; the Apostle says: "For the kingdom of God, is not meats and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17. Again it refers expressly to God's kingdom on earth, which distinguished the descendants of Abraham from the heathen, or the Gentile world; of this kingdom Christ said to the Jews: "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Math. xxi. 43. Three things are essential to the existence of a kingdom, viz: 1st. A

king to reign. 2d. Subjects to be governed, and 3d. Laws for the regulation of those subjects. In the Jewish kingdom, God was their king—the circumcised descendants of Abraham were the subjects, and the decalogue including certain ceremonial regulations, the laws by which they were governed. This is the kingdom which with some necessary variations in its laws has been taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. Although Christ does say “my kingdom is not of this world” viz: it is not a secular but a spiritual kingdom, designed for more important and elevated purposes than the kingdoms of this world, yet has the Lord Jesus established a kingdom in this world, this none will deny who are conversant with the New Testament, and surely it must be a distinguished privilege to be recognized as a subject of that kingdom. It was esteemed a great privilege to be identified as a *Roman citizen*; they had advantages and honors conferred on them which others could not claim. Even the Apostle to the Gentiles exercised this privilege, which more than once softened the severities of his sufferings, and caused his persecutors to tremble when they learned that he was a Roman citizen.

Nearly all the Pædo-baptist authors who have written on the subject, have used the term the *church*, instead of the *kingdom*, believing, no doubt, that they are the same in substance—that they are essentially one. This view of the

subject is not, however, critically correct. There are expressions made in regard to the kingdom, which cannot be applied to the *church*, as the following: “The kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemies came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, did'st thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, wilt thou that we go and gather them up? But he said nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles and burn them; but gather ye the wheat into my barn.” Math. xiii. 24, 30. The parable of the net and the fishes, expresses the same sentiment. But of the *church*, the Holy Scriptures speak a very different language. The church is composed of God's children, those who have been born again. Of those who compose Christ's *church*, it is said: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ

with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. Thus we may perceive that there is a marked difference between the *kingdom*, and the visible *church* of Christ. It may be prudent at this point to inquire what is the real character and condition of the human family in their fallen state. The inspired writer informs us, that God created man in His own image; consequently, in every respect perfect. In this holy, happy and honorable state, his Maker gave him a law to regulate his actions, and test his integrity; while Adam continued to observe this law, he remained an honorable subject of God's kingdom on earth; but from this elevated state, he fell by transgression, he lost the image of his Heavenly Father—he *died morally*, and was rendered unable of himself to think a good thought. He also *died legally*, he was driven from Eden, and became an *alien*—a heathen—a Gentile.

In this fallen, degraded, and alienated condition, Adam begat a son *in his own likeness*.



By an undeviating law of nature, children must resemble their parents. Hence the whole human family were involved in the consequences of our first parents' transgression; darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people. In this fatal tragedy, there was no line of discrimination drawn between the parent and the child. One was necessarily involved in the *consequences* of the other's transgression; therefore, the complexion of each must be the same.

The language of inspiration on the subject is, "*Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*" Rom. v. 18. "*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*" Ephes. ii. 12. "*Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" Ps. li. 5.

On the subject of original sin, great caution must be observed that we do not fall into *unrighteous* or *unreasonable* errors, or extremes. Some have charged the children with the guilt of their first parents' sin; while others assert, that children are born into the world in an uncontaminated state, as pure and spotless as Adam was originally. These are the two opposite extremes, and both wide of the truth. But while our children are free from the guilt of Adam's sin, they are necessarily implicated in the painful, melancholy consequences, flow-

ing from his transgression. To illustrate the case, suppose a distinguished citizen of these United States commits a high crime, for which his property is confiscated, and he is banished into a desolate island—there he is involved in *poverty, exile, and degradation*, as a just recompense for his crimes; he is no longer a citizen of this country; consequently, he cannot enjoy the protection of our wholesome laws, nor derive any advantages from our political regulations. In this condition he begets children: they are not, they cannot be chargeable with, or guilty of their father's iniquity; yet they are necessarily implicated: they are also involved in *poverty and exile*: they are ALIENS, and of course degraded. They are not citizens of the United States any more than their guilty father; they bear his complexion, and can rise no higher than his level.

Adam transgressed, and was banished from the presence and kingdom of his Creator; he became an *alien, an exile*; all his original wealth and glory were confiscated: he became *ignorant, and poor*, and his character degraded: he was clothed with want, and shame, and misery. Hence, all his descendants necessarily bear the same character and complexion; all mankind are implicated in his fall, and thereby alienated from their father's presence and *kingdom*.

Suppose a negotiation were entered into, making provision for the return of the exiled citizen, above adverted to, on condition that his

children should not accompany him to the United States, but remain in banishment, at least until they were capable of deciding for themselves, whether it were a privilege to be citizens or subjects of this free and happy country, or not; would their father accept such terms? Would he voluntarily leave his *exiled, alienated, impoverished* offspring in that island, and return himself to his native land again? Not so. However debased his character might be, he would say, "My children cannot be separated from their father: they are more dear to me than all the honors of my native country. If they cannot return with me, I will spend my days in exile with them."

Is it reasonable to suppose that a merciful and righteous God would impose on poor exiled, alienated man, terms which he could not honorably accept—which he could not receive without violating a law of nature, established and confirmed by God himself, and extended to all the works of his Almighty hand?

It will only be necessary to examine the plan of salvation, as revealed in God's word, to discover clearly that he has not imposed unreasonable or inconsistent terms on man.

Almighty God, in boundless mercy and condescension, made a covenant with Abraham, and received him formally into his favor and *kingdom*. This distinguished patriarch was ninety-nine years old when he was taken into covenant relation with his Maker; and being an *alien*,

a *foreigner*, a *heathen*, as were all mankind, it became necessary to place some discriminating mark or seal upon him, that he might thereby be distinguished from the subjects of the kingdom of darkness from the gentile world. This seal was circumcision, which no doubt pointed emblematically to the bloody scene which was subsequently transacted on Calvary.

Was Abraham received into God's *kingdom* on earth and his *little ones* left out? Was he elevated from heathen degradation, and taken into covenant relation with the King of Heaven, and his children excluded? Was the universal law of nature departed from in this transaction, and a separation line drawn between parents and children? Not so. It was the work of God, and must bear the mark of his divine hand. Abraham's children were received with their father into God's *kingdom on earth*, and their heathen or alienated character and condition cancelled on the eighth day.

Those, however, who are willing to dispense with all privileges and blessings for their children, under the milder and brighter rays of the gospel of Jesus Christ, believe that the legal dispensation has been completely abolished, and should never be named again by Christians—that it only referred to *temporal* blessings, promised exclusively to the Jews. If God's word and reason confirm this idea, then must it be correct.

What is the language of inspiration? Almighty God speaks to Abraham, and says,

“As for me, behold my *covenant* is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee *shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*” Gen. xii. 3; xvii. 4.

In reference to this important transaction, *Paul* says, “Know ye, therefore, that they which are of *faith*, the same are *the children of Abraham*. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; *that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ*; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through *faith*. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye *Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*” Gal. iii. 7, 13, 14, 29. In the 8th verse, he is very pointed, and says, “*The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed.*”

Surely Paul did not consider the covenant made with Abraham, as relating only to temporal blessings, and extending no further than the land of Judea, and the Jewish nation. But says the objector, “We are not now under the law, but under grace; the former dispensation has passed away forever.” Hence Paul says, “In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth

and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." Heb. vii. 13.

Let reason decide the case. Within a few years past, the people of Virginia have changed their constitution, nor will any one of intelligence say they are now under the old constitution, *that has been done away*; yet every individual of common sense in the state, knows that every article and clause in the old constitution, which has not been abrogated or superseded by the *new*, remains permanently the law of the land. The good people of these United States, more than half a century ago, threw off the yoke of Great Britain. They are not *now*, nor have they been, under the laws or the constitution of that kingdom since the declaration of their independence; yet, in *many* instances, the old code of England is referred to, and made the rule of decision in our courts of judicature.

Are the laws and institutions of man to be more permanent than the institutions and laws of God? In the King of Israel there never has been, nor will there ever be, any change. The same God who gave laws to the Israelites, sways his sceptre in the gospel kingdom. In reality, the kingdoms are but one. The former dispensation was necessarily obscured by clouds and shadows, which were dispelled when the son of righteousness arose to view.

Literally, when the sun appears above the eastern horizon, it produces an important,

beautiful, and interesting change on the face of nature; yet there is not one leaf or spire of grass varied in the slightest degree from what it was when shrouded in midnight gloom. Light has produced this revolution. To us it is a real change, yet in reality it is no change at all. So in the kingdom of grace. Light exhibits every part of the edifice in all its native perfection and beauty, yet God is not changed, nor any part of his work destroyed.

Without the old covenant, or the Old Testament, the New would be a broken fragment, which could not be systematized or understood by the most learned minister on earth. It may therefore be said, with the utmost propriety, that every thing in the old covenant or former constitution, which has not been abrogated or superseded in the new—the *gospel of Jesus Christ, must stand firm and unshaken*. Children were entitled to a place in the former kingdom by the highest authority. There is not one sentence or clause in the New Testament, which disfranchises or deprives them of that privilege. Therefore, their claim on this ground is not only honorable and just, but it is *incontrovertible*.

But we will establish our children's claim to a place in Christ's kingdom on earth from higher authority—from the New Testament—from Christ's own lips.

We should, however, be careful in reading God's word to keep in view the different sig-



nifications given to the kingdom of Heaven. In the following remarks we will confine our views to Christ's kingdom on earth, the kingdom which was taken from the Jews and given to us—to the Gentiles, Math. xxi. 43. As the Lord Jesus Christ has established a kingdom on earth, which differs materially from the kingdom of grace in the believer's heart, and also from the kingdom of glory in Heaven, the important inquiry now is, who are to be recognized as legal subjects of that kingdom? All agree that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—those who have been born again, may be received into Christ's kingdom on earth; but are our *children* to be received, or are they to be excluded therefrom? The idea of a kingdom from which children are excluded, implies an absurdity. No good man would be willing to live in any kingdom or country upon earth, if his children were not recognized as legal subjects or citizens, and protected by the laws of the land, and the strong arm of government. To say, therefore, that Christ excludes children from his kingdom on earth, would cast a reflection upon his wisdom and mercy, and mark with confusion the work of redemption, where all must be *order, perfection and harmony*. If children are not to be received into Christ's kingdom on earth legally, in what an awkward and painful position would parents be placed when they pray for their little ones? With what propriety could they ask favors of



the Lord Jesus for their alienated children who are not recognized as subjects of their Redeemer's kingdom on earth? Let us suppose the existence of a parallel case. A father emigrates from England to this country, and informs the President of the United States that he intends to make this country his future home, and eagerly asks if his family, including his little children will be protected by the wholesome laws of these United States? The President kindly replies in the affirmative—both parents and children are cared for and protected by the wholesome laws and regulations of our country. The affectionate father, however, informs the President that he has left his children in England, it would have been cruel and arbitrary to have brought them to this country without their knowledge and consent; they must remain in England until they are capable of judging for themselves, whether the government of these United States is preferable to that of Great Britain or not. Would not the President smile at the kind father's folly? And would not his folly be even greater than his disappointment?

Whether parents are conscious of the fact or not, yet do they act as inconsistently as the above foreigner, when they pray for their unbaptized children.

We rejoice, however, to know that the Lord Jesus does not exclude children from the arms of His redeeming love, but receives them freely

and kindly with their parents into His kingdom on earth. He gives them a hearty welcome. When the affectionate mothers brought their children to Christ, the disciples (as many in the present day do) forbade them, as though they had said, "what have those unconscious babes to do with our wise Master, and His doctrine?" "But *Jesus was much displeased*, and said unto them *suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God*. Verily I say unto you, whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."—Mark x. 14, 15.

Those however who are opposed to infant baptism, and refuse our children a place in Christ's kingdom on earth, say "that although the Saviour does permit children to come unto Him, He says nothing about baptizing them." We reply that our children are fully recognized as forming an honorable part of Christ's kingdom on earth, and kindly invited to come unto Christ, and we say *unequivocally* that there is no other door at which they can *legally* enter into His kingdom. They cannot *repent*, they cannot exercise *faith*; but they can and should be baptized. Our Saviour strengthens and *confirms* this opinion by the commission given to His disciples—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Math. xxviii. 19. Surely our oppos-

ing friends who mar the Saviour's kingdom, and cast a shade of deformity over His mercy and His wisdom, by excluding children therefrom, will not say that there is a nation or kingdom on earth where there are no children—where children do not form a large and honorable part of the nation or kingdom. Another objection however is frequently raised at this point—they say, “that Christ commanded His disciples to *teach*, and then baptize. But children cannot be *taught*, therefore they ought not to be baptized.” If this view of the subject is correct, if it can be considered sound logic, and correct theology, then must we submit, and weep over the unfortunate fate of our children.

Let us therefore inquire particularly how this commission is to be executed? “Go and teach them that I am their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, *the same yesterday, to day and forever.* *Teach* them that by nature they are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise. *Teach* or inform them that I have established a kingdom on earth, which is now open and ready for their reception; that they are now freely and affectionately invited to enter in, and partake of its privileges and blessings.”

But if children are not to be received and associated together with their parents as sub-

jects of this kingdom, will it not present *difficulties, inconsistencies, and contradictions?* The intelligent and reflecting part of all nations will naturally inquire, “is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever? Is he the same King who ruled over the Israelites and established his covenant with them, and received their little children on the eighth day into his kingdom, and thus elevated them to bear the same character, and enjoy the same privileges with their parents; *and does he now exclude our little ones from his earthly fold altogether?* If we enter into his kingdom on earth, must our children still remain foreigners and aliens? Does he regard our offspring less than he did the children and descendants of Abraham? If so, he must have changed; he is not the same he once was. Under the gospel, he must be more unkind than he was under the law. *Please to explain this difficulty?*”

Again; you teach us to pray—“*Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.*” Do not little children compose part of God’s kingdom in heaven? If you refuse to receive them into Christ’s kingdom below, how can his will be done on earth; as it is done in heaven?

Once more. If Jesus Christ has established a kingdom on earth, in which there is to be no children, it will resemble no good kingdom on earth or in heaven: therefore, the term *kingdom* is altogether inapplicable.

Jesus Christ never directed his disciples and ministers to *teach* the nations doctrines

which were, in their very nature, *inconsistent* and *contradictory*: therefore, children *must be received* into Christ's kingdom on earth; and if they are received, *they must be baptized*.

Let us, however, examine how the Apostles executed their commission. The first gospel sermon preached by them after they received full authority from God, was on the day of pentecost; did Peter on that occasion *teach* the people that there was *now* to be a separating line drawn between parents and their children? Hear his own words—"repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 38, 39.

In the covenant made with their father Abraham, the Almighty had *promised* to be a God to him and his seed after him—"and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Hence Paul says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." Rom. xv. 8.

The Apostles did not *teach* inconsistencies—they did not separate parents and their children. The Jewish parents had always been accustomed to dedicate their children to the Lord under the law, and under the new covenant they may still do the same.

Another argument to prove that the Apostles did not "*teach the nations*" that parents and their children were to be separated under the gospel, may be drawn from the circumstance of their *baptizing entire households*. Children are found in *almost* every family or household; therefore, if they are not to be baptized, the inspired writers opened a very wide door for *collision* and *difficulty*, where all are to be of *one heart and one mind*; where there should be no discordant sound heard. We respectfully ask those who are opposed to infant baptism, to say how many households they have ever known baptized, where there were certainly no children?

Let us now suppose a case, which has frequently occurred in modern times, and no doubt but it often happened in the days of the Apostles, since all to whom they preached the gospel (except the Jews) were *heathens*—were gentiles. Suppose in one of those heathen families, the wife embraces religion, and is happily converted to God and *baptized*; she is now a *christian*, but her husband is still a *heathen*; what must be done with the *children*? Must they continue to be classed with the *heathen* father, or may they be identified with their *christian* mother? If they must remain with their father, *then let them alone*; but if they may be honored and elevated and classed with their christian mother, something must be done for them—some legal process is in-

dispensably necessary to effect that change—*that process is baptism.*

Without divine authority or instruction in this case, great difficulty would ensue. The Holy Scriptures, which are given to us for a lamp to our feet, and a lantern to our path, have not left us in the dark in this intricate and perplexing dilemma.

The Apostle to the gentiles says: "*For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; (i. e. heathens,) but now are they holy,*" viz. numbered with God's people. 1 Cor. vii. 14. This passage is so applicable, and so much in point, that it requires no comment. Therefore, if only the mother has become interested in the covenant of grace, and entered legally into the Redeemer's kingdom on earth *by baptism*, her children may also be included; they may be baptized, and with their mother have their *heathen name and character* washed away, (*the only kind of sin which water can wash away,*) they are now no more "*strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*" If the father still remains an alien, a gentile, it shall be by his own voluntary choice, no part of the blame can be charged to a merciful God, who has "*done all things well,*" for us and for our children. But if children are to be rejected, their case is indeed deplorable; the father, in the



case alluded to, may also embrace religion, receive the ordinance of baptism, become a Christian, and leave the poor little children alone still to remain aliens—foreigners.

It may now be necessary to answer some queries frequently made by those who object to infant baptism.

*First.* “What benefit can children derive from baptism?—What good can it do them?” We answer by asking, is it any advantage or benefit to your children that they are not *slaves*? Does it afford you no consolation to know that your children, even in infancy, are recognized as the subjects of a free and happy government, and carefully protected by its wholesome laws? And can you see no benefit resulting to your children from the pleasing circumstance that they are elevated with their parents into the *Redeemer's kingdom* on earth.

Is it a matter of no concern or importance to bear the mark of Jehovah's people, and to know that his everlasting arms of love and mercy are thrown around your little ones?

Is there a christian parent on earth who would not rejoice to have his children taken into covenant relation with their Maker, and to know that they were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God? Allow me respectfully to ask, can your unbaptized children claim those distinguished privileges? Every intelligent christian must answer in the negative.



It has been already proved, that *all children* are born in an alienated state. Aliens are legally dead; so must their children be; hence the word of God says—“*For as in Adam all die,*” &c. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Now, whatever character children originally bear, they must retain until it is changed by some legal process; this process must be baptism, which *legally* introduces our children into Christ’s kingdom on earth; consequently, they are in that act *legally brought to life*; so that baptism may be called a *new birth*.

Some in the present day have mistaken the change in our condition effected by baptism, for a *spiritual* change, than which nothing can be more absurd. “*That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.*” “*Except a man be born of WATER, and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” Water changes our relative condition, and elevates our character; the *spirit* renews, purifies and elevates the immortal part. Baptism is only the legal door into Christ’s kingdom. Regeneration, or the new birth, is the door into his spiritual kingdom.

To place the benefit resulting from infant baptism in a more conspicuous and interesting light, let us suppose the case of an enslaved mother and her infant child, the child is as much a slave as its mother; consequently DEAD—*dead to the law*; were you to sell the child from its mother’s arms, the law would

neither condemn nor punish you for the cruel deed.

But let the master emancipate the child, the moment the clerk makes the record, the child *is brought to life*; it that moment becomes as free as the master's child, yet the infant may be asleep; and completely unconscious of the transaction.

But the mother's heart can now leap for joy—"my child is free—it cannot be sold now from my arms. The *law* now secures the rights of my child, and protects it from outrage and cruelty."

This rational and scriptural view of the subject, would correct many erroneous opinions respecting infant baptism, and influence every feeling parent to say—"my children shall be *brought to Christ; they shall be baptized*—they shall no longer remain legally dead, and alienated from their heavenly Father's arms of covenant love and mercy."

Some believe from this view of the subject, that we exclude unbaptized children from heaven; not so. Baptism relates to, and changes the *condition* only, and not the heart. The slave child will be taken to heaven as certainly as the child of the most pious divine on earth; yet there is a very wide difference in the condition and privileges of the two in this world. Because a slave child will be taken to heaven, should I therefore be as willing to see my child a *slave*, as a free born citizen of this country?

Until our children are baptized they are *legally* dead, and in a state of heathen degradation, as much so in the sight of heaven as the African slave is in our estimation. Yet the spiritual condition of the slave is the same in God's sight as the master's child.

Waiving those distinguished privileges, resulting to our children from the ordinance of baptism, we respectfully ask, may it not do our children as much good, as circumcision could do the infant descendants of Abraham? God himself ordered them to be circumcised; and every Jew esteemed it a peculiar privilege conferred on his child. Baptism is said expressly to be Christ's circumcision, Col. ii. 11, shall we call in question the wisdom and goodness of God when he specifies the seal which shall be placed on our children, when they are received into covenant relation with their heavenly Father? We are aware, however, that our Baptist brethren deny this position; among other objections they say, if baptism stands now in the place of circumcision, why were not the Jewish females circumcised?

We remark, that the woman was in the transgression originally, and was ever after doomed to bear a greater degree of odium than the man. Hence in all heathen nations to the present time the female character is exceedingly degraded. The women are generally doomed to perform all the drudgery of life, while the husband occupies a slothful eminence, from which

he looks down with savage indifference upon his wives. Under the Mosaic dispensation, the glorious plan of salvation was only in part revealed; so that the reproach was only in part removed from the woman; she was, it is true, elevated from her heathen degraded condition; but it was only through and by the seal of circumcision placed upon her male offspring. But when Christ appeared on earth to introduce a more glorious era; having been born of a *woman*, he honored and elevated the female character to an equal standing in his *kingdom* and church, with their husbands and fathers. As the woman was the first in the transgression, and the principal agent in drawing down disgrace and ruin on our race, and was thereby doomed to bear a peculiar amount of the disgrace; so in the fulness of time she became the honored medium through which the Redeemer of our lost race came into the world. Hence, under the gospel dispensation it can be said—For ye are *all* the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither *male* nor *female*: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal. iii. 26, 27, 28.

The human family through the influence and effects of sin, have become *morally, intellectually and legally dead*. Our *moral death* may be annulled and spiritual life restored by the act

of regeneration effected through *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. Our *intellectual death* may be at least partially removed through the effects of *education*: But if *baptism* does not restore us to *legal life*, by introducing us into Christ's kingdom on earth, then is there no remedy in the plan of salvation for this evil, we must remain strangers to God's covenant mercies, and continue to bear the *legal* image of our apostate father Adam—we must remain *aliens—gentiles—*heathens; this we cannot believe, and by the authority of our Saviour, we say that the act of *baptism* is a *legal birth*. Christ's words are—" *Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*"—John iii. 5.

Thus to be "*born of water*"—*to be baptized*, is to be brought into *legal* existence, and recognized as subjects of Christ's kingdom on earth, and made partakers of the blessings of his kingdom, as a Jew by the act of circumcision was separated from the gentile world, and recognized as a subject of God's kingdom on earth, which kingdom Christ said "shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

*Secondly.* An insuperable objection is made to infant baptism, by some, because they believe the word of God requires something as a prerequisite, which children are incompetent to perform, viz. *Faith*. This objection is founded

on what is said, Acts viii. 13, and xviii. 8; but particularly Mark xvi. 16. "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" If this text debars children from the ordinance of baptism, because they cannot *believe*, it must also exclude them from the kingdom of heaven—for they *cannot* BELIEVE, therefore they *must be* DAMNED. Such an idea would shock the feelings of a savage. The mistake which our objectors have made in the application of this text, is in departing from a correct mode of reasoning; children are not embraced in the *premises*, therefore they should not be included in the *conclusion*. If they are excluded from one, they must be from the other, or all our arguments will terminate in error and confusion.

The objector further contends, that because the word *believeth* precedes the term *baptize*, the subjects must believe before they can be legally baptized. The order of words does not invariably determine the order of things. It is said "John did *baptize* in the wilderness, and *preach* the baptism of repentance." Mark i. 4. Agreeably to the above mode of reasoning, John must have baptized before he *preached*—which no one can believe.

There was a law in Virginia under the old constitution which restricted all but freeholders from voting. Were that law written in the style and phraseology of this passage of scripture, it would read—"He that votes and is a

freeholder, his vote shall be 'valid.'" Would there be any one in the state so simple as to contend, that because the word *vote* preceded the term *freeholder*, a man must first vote, and then purchase a farm to legalize his vote? The case is plain. A man has been a freeholder all his life, and yet he *votes and is a freeholder*. Again—Suppose the term baptized were changed to a *white man*, it would then read—"He that believeth and is a white man shall be saved." Would it be necessary to believe first, and then become a white man? No; the individual has always been white—he *now BELIEVETH and is a white man*. The individual who has been baptized in infancy—when he believes, it may be correctly said in the language of the above text—"he believeth and is baptized." The word of God rationally understood, will not sustain this objection to our children, therefore it must fall to the ground.

*Thirdly.* "They ought not to be brought to Christ in the ordinance of baptism, because baptism is the answer of a good conscience. Children cannot enjoy the answer of a good conscience for what was done to them by their parents in infancy; therefore they should not be baptized."

By this mode of reasoning every foreigner who voluntarily renounces his own country—adopts this, and becomes an American citizen, must be more respected, and confided in above the individual who happened to be born in the



United States—he had no hand, or choice in regulating his own destiny, while the naturalized foreigner enjoys the answer of a good conscience—he voluntarily renounced his native country and chose this for his permanent home. Yet the poor man who happened by fate's stern decree to be born on Columbia's soil, neither feels nor acknowledges his inferiority; but rationally and honestly claims a superiority over the naturalized stranger. David looked down with contempt on the *uncircumcised* Philistine, although David himself was no doubt *circumcised on the eighth day*, which he esteemed a privilege that placed him above the heathen Goliath.

*Fourthly.* “If children are baptized, it is said that they should partake of all the privileges of the Lord's house—they should approach their Father's table. This they are incapable of; therefore, they should not be baptized.”

We answer, the child is an American citizen, and can claim the protection of the law with as much propriety as any other citizen of the country. The culprit would be executed as soon for murdering the child as the parent; yet children do not enjoy the *entire privilege* of the law, until they pass their minority. So in Christ's kingdom, as soon as the subjects are *regenerated, converted, or born again*, be that when it may, that being the spiritual door into Christ's kingdom, they enter in, and can then claim and enjoy all the blessings of the church.



militant. They are then received into closer connection with the king. They can then approach their Father's table, and truly say, "Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ."

If our divine Redeemer has called the gospel dispensation a *kingdom*, and there is not a corresponding resemblance between it and well regulated earthly kingdoms, *then is the term not applicable?* The Lord Jesus does not make comparisons where there is no resemblance. He always speaks to the comprehension of frail mortals, that they may be edified and not bewildered.

*Fifthly.* Those who have been baptized in infancy, it is confidently said, are no better than others; therefore, they ought not to be baptized.

This objection may be satisfactorily answered, by asking, are there no desperate characters in these United States?

Consult the annals of the day—examine our penitentiaries and jails, and you will find a black catalogue of natural born Americans, as well as naturalized foreigners, that would disgrace the name of savage. But does this prove, that it is not a privilege to be an American citizen? Surely not. The King himself gives us to understand, that there will continue to be good and evil in his kingdom on earth. He says, "*As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end*

*of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of HIS KINGDOM all that offends, and them which do iniquity."* Again, "*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and GATHERED OF EVERY KIND, which, when it was full, they drew to the shore, and sat down and GATHERED THE GOOD INTO VESSELS, and cast THE BAD AWAY.*" Math. xiii, 40, 41, 47, 48.

After those unequivocal declarations from such high authority, to refuse our children a place in their Redeemer's kingdom on earth, and a name among their fathers, because they might at some future period become wicked, has at least the appearance of a little prejudice existing in the heart, rather than much wisdom in the mind.

*Sixthly.* The most prominent objection generally made to infant baptism is, that there is no positive command or example recorded in the word of God to justify it—"Show me"—says the objector, "*a thus saith the Lord* for infant baptism, or I cannot admit its validity." We reply by observing that there is no *thus saith the Lord*—no example or command to justify female communion, yet in any branch of the church where the ordinance is used, females are freely admitted. There is no New Testament command to keep the Sabbath day holy; yet we all agree and know that it is binding on Christians. Again, there is no *thus saith the Lord* in the holy book forbidding polyga-

my; yet from any living branch of Christ's church on earth a man would be excluded for marrying two wives.

Nor is the inferential authority in favor of female communion and the observance of the Sabbath day, and against polygamy, as strong and conclusive, as it is in favor of infant baptism. Why will you be more rigid against *infants* than adults? If a friend were to bequeath a legacy to your child, you would not ask is there any law to compel my acceptance—no it would be gratefully received, and esteemed a privilege.

In the conclusion of the Old Testament, we have the following interesting promise: "*Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*" Mal. iv. 5, 6.

This promise refers immediately to the gospel day, when the enlightened and purified hearts of the parents will turn with tender solicitude to their children. They will no longer suffer them carelessly to run like the wild ass's colt; nor will they be willing any longer to name them as they do their domestic animals. They will recognize and receive the Holy One of Israel as their merciful sovereign, whose kingdom shall not be diverse from all other kingdoms in heaven or on earth.

In every well-regulated kingdom, there are and must be children; and the affectionate parent should rejoice to hear the King say, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.*"

We respectfully ask those who deny their children the right of baptism, consequently, any part or lot in the Redeemer's *kingdom* on earth, to say *what is the character and condition of their children?* Are they Christians? No—they have no legal claim to that character. Are they Jews? No—they have not been circumcised, and thereby separated from the gentile world. Are they then *Gentiles, Heathens, Aliens, or Mahomedans*: or have they no name on earth, or religious identity of character among the sons of men? In what a strange and unfortunate dilemma are those placed, who deny infant baptism!

If our children have never been dedicated to the Lord by any legal process; if they are still "*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,* Ephes. ii. 12, how can we consistently ask God to throw his gracious arms of mercy around them?

And will you leave your children in their heathen, alienated state, and yet implore God's blessings to rest upon them, without introducing them into his kingdom? Or will you be consistent, and not pray for them at all?

Children were the first martyrs for the Lord Jesus Christ, (Math. ii. 16 ;) and will he in return, contrary to his own character, and the laws which he has established for the government of universal nature, and in opposition to his former dealings with the Jews, exclude them from the privileges and blessings of his kingdom?

*Reason, and righteousness, and parental affection, and the word of God—all conspire with one accord to say, "No, they shall not be excluded or cast off." The King himself proclaims aloud, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God?"*

As much may be adduced in history; both for and against the validity of Infant Baptism, we shall only submit the following extracts from Watson's Institutes, which we think sufficient to convince every impartial reader that Infant Baptism was practised by the Apostles, and by them handed down to their successors in the church, unless indeed those plain and conclusive statements can be rejected by higher authority, which cannot be done.

"(1.) If the baptism of the infant children of believers was not practised by the Apostles and by the primitive churches, when and where did the practice commence? To this question the Baptist writers can give no answer. It is an innovation, according to them, not upon the circumstances of a sacrament, but upon its

*essential principle*; and yet its introduction produced no struggle; was never noticed by any general or provincial council; and excited no controversy! This itself is strong presumptive proof of its *early* antiquity. On the other hand, we can point out the only ancient writer who opposed infant baptism. This was Tertullian, who lived late in the second century; but his very opposition to the practice proves, that that practice was more ancient than himself; and the principles on which he impugns it, further show that it was so. He regarded this sacrament superstitiously; he appended to it the *trine* immersion in the name of each of the persons of the Trinity; he gives it gravely as a reason why infants should not be baptized, that Christ says, "Suffer the little children to *come* unto me," therefore, they must stay till they are able to come, that is, till they are grown up; "and he would prohibit the unmarried, and all in a widowed state, from baptism, because of the temptations to which they may be liable." The whole of this is solved by adverting to that notion of the efficacy of this sacrament in taking away all *previous* sins, which then began to prevail, so that an inducement was held out for delaying baptism as long as possible, till at length, in many cases, it was postponed to the article of death, under the belief that the dying who received this sacrament were the more secure of salvation. Tertullian, accordingly, with all his zeal, allowed

that infants ought to be baptized *if their lives be in danger*, and thus evidently shows that his opposition to the baptism of infants in ordinary rested upon a very different principle from that of the modern Anti-pædobaptists. Amidst all his arguments against this practice, Tertullian, however, never ventures upon one which would have been most to his purpose, and which might most forcibly have been urged had not baptism been administered to infants by the Apostles and their immediate successors. That argument would have been the *novelty* of the practice, which he never asserts, and which, as he lived so early, he might have proved, had he had any ground for it. On the contrary, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, in the second century, and Origen in the beginning of the third, expressly mention infant baptism as the practice of their times, and, by the latter, this is assigned to apostolical injunction. Fidus, an African bishop, applied to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, to know, not whether infants were to be baptized, but whether their baptism might take place before the eighth day after their birth, that being the day on which circumcision was performed by the law of Moses. This question was considered in an African synod, held A. D. 254, at which sixty-six bishops were present, and “it was unanimously decreed, ‘that it was not necessary to defer baptism to that day; and that the grace of God, or baptism, should be given to all, and



especially to infants'” This decision was communicated in a letter from Cyprian to Fidus. We trace the practice also downwards. In the fourth century, Ambrose says that “infants who are baptized, are reformed from wickedness to the primitive state of their nature;” and at the end of that century, the famous controversy took place between Augustine and Pelagius, concerning original sin, in which the uniform practice of baptizing infants from the days of the Apostles was admitted by both parties, although they assigned different reasons for it. So little indeed were Tertullian’s absurdities regarded, that he appears to have been quite forgotten by this time; for Augustine, says he, never heard of any Christian, catholic or sectary, who taught any other doctrine than that infants are to be baptized. Infant baptism is not mentioned in the canons of any council; nor is it insisted upon as an object of faith in any creed; and thence we infer that it was a point not controverted at any period of the ancient church, and we know that it was the practice in all established churches. Wall says, that Peter Bruis, a Frenchman, who lived about the year 1030, whose followers were called Petrobrussian, was the first Anti-pædobaptist teacher who had a regular congregation. The Anabaptists of Germany took their rise in the beginning of the fifteenth century; but it does not appear that there was any congregation of Anabaptists

in England, till the year 1640. That a practice which can be traced up to the very first periods of the church, and has been, till within very modern times, its uncontradicted practice, should have a lower authority than apostolic usage and appointment, may be pronounced impossible.”.

R E M A R K S  
ON THE  
MODE OF ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE  
OF  
B A P T I S M .

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HAVING clearly established our children's claim to a participation in the privileges and blessings of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, we now proceed to offer a few thoughts on the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism which alone can give them a **LEGAL TITLE** to those benefits.

Should a master command his servant to execute a piece of work, without specifying minutely how it was to be performed, and then object to the manner of its execution, and chastise his servant because he had not strictly conformed to a definite rule which he had never plainly laid down, it would be unjust and cruel.

God is infinitely just and merciful, and will never demand of his servants any thing unreasonable. He will not reap where he has not sowed, or gather where he has not strewed. Therefore, he will not hold them accountable—condemn and punish them for not administering

the ordinance of baptism agreeably to a definite rule which he has never specifically laid down for their observance.

One, however, peremptorily declares that this is not the fact, and positively asserts that the Greek word *baptizo* plainly and simply means to *immerse* and nothing else; he appeals to wise and learned men to prove his assertion. Another, as positively objects to this declaration, and refers to as many, or more authors and divines, equally as wise and learned and pious, who fearlessly declare that the Greek word does not exclusively mean immersion, any more than the word *House*, exclusively means a *frame* building. Now when two witnesses of equal standing in society, give testimony directly opposite to each other, both cannot be received; neither can one be taken and the other rejected; but both must be set aside: therefore, from the learned we can prove nothing; their testimony conflicts—*both must be rejected*.

Another, is astonished at the stupidity of men, and unequivocally declares, “that it requires neither wisdom nor learning to understand this subject—the command is plain—it cannot be misconstrued, nor can we be mistaken unless we close our eyes to the truth, and become perversely obstinate.” God’s word expressly says, of Christ, that he came straightway *up out of the water*; and of Philip and the eunuch, that “they both went down

into, and came up out of the water ; therefore, they *must have been immersed*, and nothing else can be baptism." As well might I charge my kind friend with an intention to burn me to death, because he *pressed me to come into the fire*. The master commands his servant to make *a fire in the dining room*; John obeys *literally* his orders, and burns the house down ! When his master calls him to account for such conduct, he defends and exculpates himself by declaring, that he has done just what he was commanded to do—his master said not one word about making the fire in the fire-place, or on the hearth, *but in the room*—"your orders, master, were faithfully and literally obeyed."

We must, therefore, be pardoned for passing by and rejecting the disputes and the conflicting opinions of the learned respecting the import of the word, and also the positive declarations of those who immerse Christ and the eunuch, because they *went down into, and came up out of the water*."

Instances in the present day have occurred, where the subjects *went down into, and came up out of the water*, and were baptized, but *not immersed*.

As there has been no definite mode prescribed in God's word for administering the ordinance of baptism, it is reasonable to say that the mode cannot be essential to the validity of the ordinance. Our own opinion is decid-

edly, that *sprinkling* or *pouring* is the most rational and scriptural mode of administering baptism: yet, as immersion is not forbidden in the sacred word, it may be innocently and correctly administered in that form to those who prefer it. God has said, "let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind."

It will at once be seen that we do not intend to denounce *immersion*; neither shall we use the bed of Procrustes, and lop off all who are too long, or stretch all who are too short for our measure. "*Without charity, I am nothing.*"

We hear the objector say, "your liberality is incompatible with the word of God on this subject; therefore, it cannot be justified." Well, by that divine rule we will stand or fall.

"Does not God's word expressly declare that there is "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*" Ephes. iv. 5; which proves that there can be only one mode of administering the ordinance, and as nearly all professing Christians agree that immersion is a valid mode, no other can be correct or admissible."

On examination, this conclusion from the text cannot be sustained. The apostle Paul is too good a logician to draw a parallel where there is no agreement. The parallel is—*God—Faith—Baptism*. First—"one Lord." In the God-head there are three persons, *and these three are ONE*. Secondly—"one Faith." Abraham was strong in *faith*. Christ said to Peter: "O ye of *little faith*;" yet *faith* is one

and the same thing, differing in degrees. Thirdly—"one Baptism." *Sprinkling—pouring and immersing, and these three are ONE.*

This illustration of the text is rational and plain, and if it proves any thing in reference to water baptism, it is that there are at least three modes of administering that ordinance.

The gospel inculcates charity, and without it, St. Paul declares we are nothing. It would not, however, evince much charity, or expansion of soul, in an individual who would erect a house at an immense expense, and then call his neighbors together and inform them that his house was in every respect a perfect house; therefore, every thing that differs from it in size, or construction, must necessarily be no house!

#### JOHN'S BAPTISM.

In the consideration of this part of our subject, we will first examine John's baptism; its *nature and design.*

Whatever erring mortals may do, it is impossible that Almighty God should do, or direct any thing to be done, without having some wise and beneficial design in view.

Were an individual busily engaged in making an extensive excavation in the earth, and you were to inquire of him, "what are you doing? What is your object in all this labor?" and he were deliberately to reply—"I don't know!—I have no object in view!" You would at least suspect the sanity of his mind.



Let us then inquire. *First.* What was the nature of John's baptism? Was it of Jewish or Christian character? John must have acted either in the Mosaic or Christian dispensation; that he appeared and acted in the former is evident from our Lord's words, and also, from those of the Baptist himself—"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Luke vii. 28. Mat. xi. 11. John said of himself—"He must increase, but I must decrease." It necessarily follows, that John's baptism was a Jewish ceremony; neither could he legally *originate, or administer Christian ordinances.*

No officer of any grade can legally execute the duties of his office in any county or state, except the one in which he received his appointment. If therefore John's was the Christian baptism, and Christ received it as a *Christian ordinance*, then is *John* and *not Christ* the *foundation*, the *chief corner stone*, at least in this building. This rational and necessary conclusion from the premises, we are inclined to think, even our Baptist brethren will not receive. If then the conclusion falls, the premises must go also.

Proof positive that John's baptism was only a Jewish ceremony and not a Christian ordinance, is found in the fact that the Apostles baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus those

whom John had previously baptized. See Acts xix. 1 to 5.

*Secondly*, What was the design of his baptism?

The Messiah had long been promised to the Jewish nation; they had been for many years expecting his appearance. Zachariah said of him, "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*" Luke, i. 17.

John came announcing the immediate appearance of their Saviour, the Holy One of Israel. It would be extremely indecorous and offensive to the character of a distinguished guest, to receive him into our house when every thing was in disorder, and the family clothed in their ordinary and soiled garments; nor would it be less mortifying to the family to be found in such a condition.

Hence we may rationally infer, that John's baptism was an emblem of that purity of heart—that spotless robe in which they should meet their King—the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is *Holy*. He came preaching in the wilderness, saying, "*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" The Jews heard the intelligence, and ran from every part of Judea to receive his baptism. Nor do we hear any controversy, or one word of inquiry respecting this ordi-

nance, from those people devoted to the custom of their fathers, and bitterly opposed to any innovation on their laws or customs. His baptism, then, must have been regarded by the Jews as a purifying ceremony. Do any object to this hypothesis? Let them show one more rational and scriptural. John received no members or proselytes into either the Jewish or Christian kingdom or church; therefore, his baptism was not an initiatory ceremony; consequently, entirely different in its design from the Christian baptism.

As John was a Jew, and all whom he baptized were Jews, and as his was not the Christian baptism, but emblematic of the purifying ceremonies of the Jews, and calculated to soften their prejudices, and *prepare the way* for the reception of the Christian baptism, it is not reasonable to suppose that John could depart from the directions given by Moses for performing such ceremonies. It is therefore, only necessary to know how the Jews were purified under the law, to ascertain how John baptized.

For this information we must appeal to the Old Testament—"And he shall *sprinkle* upon him, that is to be *cleansed* from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him *clean*." Lev. xiv. 7.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and *cleanse* them; and thus shalt thou

do unto them to *cleanse* them; *sprinkle* water of purification upon them." Numb. viii. 5, 6, 7. "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel; because the water of separation was not *sprinkled* upon him, he shall be *unclean*—his uncleanness is yet upon him." Numb. xix. 13.

The law of Moses abounds with directions for purifying persons and things; nor is there one instance where the unclean person or thing is commanded to be *dipped* or *plunged* into the purifying element. It is sometimes added, that the persons to be cleansed shall wash their clothes, and bathe *themselves* in water; but when the purifying element is applied by an *administrator*, it is uniformly done by *sprinkling* or *pouring*.

The prophet looking forward to the extension of God's earthly kingdom, says, "So shall he *sprinkle many nations*." Isaiah lii. 15. Again, there is a promise made to the dispersed Israelites, which must refer to the gospel days—and to a period yet to come—"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I *sprinkle clean* water upon you, and ye shall be *clean*; from all your *filthiness*, and from all your idols, will I *cleanse* you." Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25.

St. Paul, in speaking of those legal ceremonies, to show the intimate connection between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, says, "For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, *sprinkling* the unclean, *sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh*, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God."

For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he *sprinkled* likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all vessels of the ministry." Heb. ix. 13, 14, 19, 20, 21.

Thus we have sufficient evidence from the Old and the New Testaments, to prove that *sprinkling* and *pouring* were the legitimate and only modes of purifying persons or things under the law of Moses, when applied by an administrator. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that those people who have ever been, and are still tenacious to an extreme of every particular enjoined on them by their law, would have quietly submitted to see John depart from the custom of their fathers.

It is asked, "Why did John resort to Jordan and Enon, where there was much water, if he did not baptize by immersion?—He had his residence in the deserts and wilderness. Luke i. 80; iii. 2. He had no control over the synagogues or the temple; and the multitudes that flocked to him to receive the ceremony, could be better accommodated at the margin of a river, than in a house of worship. The rural scene was best suited to the circumstances in which he was placed; and as the ceremony performed by him was typical of *purity*, he would naturally apply a better and more perfect emblem. *Running* or *living* water is purer than that which is stagnant. Moses also had directed that *living* water should be used for *purifying*. See Lev. xiv. 51, 52, and Numb. xix. 17, 18. Hence the sign was not only expressive of the thing signified, but it was in accordance with their own laws and customs—a circumstance of the utmost importance with every honest Jew.

Respecting John's baptism, a judicious Divine makes the following interesting calculation and remarks:—

It is unreasonable to suppose, that John baptized the multitudes that came to his baptism, by immersing or plunging them under the water, in the short time of his ministry. The most that we can make of John's ministry, by a fair deduction from the sacred Scriptures, is not over one year. Now suppose John had spent that whole year in baptizing twelve persons every hour, occupying twelve hours every day, making no allowance for bad weather; he could have baptized but fifty-two thousand, two hundred



and sixty persons. It has been supposed that John must have baptized not less than one million, to have justified the strong language used by the Evangelist: "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." Many of the Baptists do not hesitate to say, that John baptized at least half a million of persons. But allow them all they can ask, and say that John's ministry was one year and a half, and allow him to have baptized sixty every hour, for twelve hours in a day, and it would amount only to three hundred ninety four thousand and two hundred. But who in his sober senses can possibly suppose, that John spent the whole time of his ministry, standing in the water at sufficient depth to immerse a man under the water, twelve hours every day for the space of eighteen months. He that can believe this, can believe any thing, and every thing, even the greatest absurdities and contradictions imaginable.

From John's own words, we have satisfactory evidence that he did not baptize by immersion. Whatever others may do, inspired writers do not draw parallels where there is no analogy or agreement. He says, "I indeed baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear—he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost and *with* fire." Every Christian will acknowledge, that the baptism of the Holy Ghost must constitute the substance; and that water baptism is only the shadow.

Now the substance and the shadow *must* correspond—it cannot be otherwise. The Holy Scriptures *uniformly* represent the Holy Ghost as being *poured* or *shed forth*; and unless John spoke *unintelligibly* and *inconsistently*, SPRINKLING and POURING *must be correct modes* of administering the ordinance of baptism. Sprink-



ling and pouring may be considered as synonymous terms. We frequently say, when it rains very fast, "*it pours down.*" The inspired writers also use the same language—"For he maketh the small drops of water: they *pour down.*" Job xxxvi. 27.

If John immersed the multitudes who flocked to him in the *wilderness*, where there could be no convenient place to change their apparel, and those immense crowds of people, men and women, changed their dress in presence of each other; or if they were exposed together in their wet clothes; it was not only a departure from the regulations of their fathers, but it was opposed to the laws of respect and decency observed by all civilized nations, and a direct violation of the Apostle's command—"Let all things be done decently and in order."

#### CHRIST'S BAPTISM.

The baptism of our Saviour next demands our consideration. The following account is given of this interesting circumstance. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him; but John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee; and comest thou to me? Jesus answered and said unto him, suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to *fulfill all righteousness.* Then he suffered him. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water; and lo the heavens were opened unto

him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Math. iii.13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Observe, Christ does not say, I AM ABOUT TO SET AN EXAMPLE FOR MY PEOPLE TO FOLLOW; neither does he say that he was about to INSTITUTE but to FULFILL. Now as John could not legally administer any other than Jewish ceremonies, the *righteousness* which Christ *fulfilled* in his baptism, must have referred to some Jewish ritual. He had been circumcised at the proper age; and dedicated in the temple, subsequently, by a legal offering. It was of vital importance that he should *fulfill* all the *ceremonial*, as well as the moral law: his own declaration is—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." Math. v. 17, 18. Indeed, he could omit no part of the law, without being an imperfect Saviour.

The law required that the priests should be washed with water, and anointed with oil previous to their entering into the priestly office; they entered into the ministry at the age of thirty. Numb. iv. 47. Our Redeemer bears eminently the character of *High Priest*; and Paul says—*Wherefore in ALL THINGS IT BE-*

HOVED HIM TO BE MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN, *that he might be a merciful and FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST in things pertaining to God.*"

Heb. ii. 17. And Luke says—"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased. *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.*" Luke iii. 21, 22, 23. And in reference to the anointing enjoined on the priests in the law, Peter in his sermon to Cornelius, remarks—"That word I say ye know, which was preached throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, *after the baptism which John preached; how that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power.*" Acts x. 37, 38.

Thus we may clearly perceive the design of our Saviour's baptism, and what ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS it was which he FULFILLED in attending in that ceremony. If indeed the ceremonial washing enjoined on the priests by the law, was not *fulfilled* by Christ in his baptism, we have no account that he ever did *fulfill* it; consequently his own word must fail, and his work be imperfect.

It therefore necessarily follows, that this ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS must have been FULFILLED as Moses directed. "AND THE LORD SPAKE

UNTO MOSES, SAYING, TAKE THE LEVITES FROM AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, and CLEANSE THEM, SPRINKLE WATER OF PURIFYING UPON THEM." If then Christ did fulfill the righteousness of the law perfectly, which we all believe—we all know he did—then was the water SPRINKLED *on him in his baptism*. If he was immersed, the law was not perfectly fulfilled—the conclusion is irresistible.

Those who contend that immersion is the only proper mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, deny that Christ was inducted into the priestly office by John to *fulfill* the law, because that law limited the priestly office to the tribe of Levi. They should recollect that the Levites were taken to fill the priestly office instead of the first born. See Numb. iii. 12, 13, and viii. 14 to 19. And when the darker dispensation was about to yield to the light of the gospel day, it was perfectly reasonable that the King Eternal, who possessed fully the power, should change the priesthood, or cause it to revert back to its original channel, and also the law regulating that office; to prove that this was done, the Apostle to the Gentiles says—"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom those things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood." Heb. vii. 12, 13, 14.

Paul here perfectly explains the difficulty ; and to avoid collision with the Jewish authorities, God provided a *special agent*, *virtually* invested with every legal requisite, to administer the ceremony to his son Jesus Christ, who is our *Great High Priest*.

By those who believe that *immersion* is the only correct mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, the case of the eunuch, related Acts viii. 38, 39, is considered as conclusive.

There is, however, no evidence to prove that the eunuch was immersed, stronger than there exists to prove the immersion of our Saviour ; it has been already satisfactorily proved that he could not have been *legally* immersed. The eunuch was travelling in his chariot, which forbids the idea that he had any vessel with him to contain water ; that Philip had, is still more improbable ; it is therefore, reasonable to suppose that they were compelled to go down to the water. For the strength of the phraseology of the sentence which relates the fact, see page 45.

That there was a convenient place at hand to immerse the eunuch ; or that each of them had a change of apparel with them ; that they changed their apparel on the highway ; or that they continued to wear their wet clothes, is, to say the least, *extremely improbable*. Certain we are, that it would not happen once in one hundred instances in this country, which is much better watered than Judea, that after

meeting and conversing with a traveller for a few minutes, there would be found at hand a convenient place to be immersed in water.

And must we take all those improbabilities and inconsistencies, for infallible proof that the eunuch was *immersed*, because it is said they went down into, and came up out of the water; when even our learned friends are daily in the practice of pressing their neighbors to *come into the fire*, whilst they only mean they shall *come to it*?

The passage which the eunuch was reading is recorded in the seventh verse of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and in the last verse of the fifty-second chapter it is written—"So shall he *sprinkle* many nations." Philip convinced the eunuch that the Prophet spake of Christ; nor is it reasonable to suppose that he would read what was said only eight verses from the passage quoted which says—"He (*Christ*) shall *sprinkle many nations*" without inquiring into the cause of the discrepancy, if in his baptism he must necessarily be *immersed*. The conclusion is *irresistible* that the eunuch received the ordinance by *sprinkling*.

We beg the readers especial attention to the following analogy and connection—"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, and the word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one."



1 John v. 7, 8. The blood was uniformly *sprinkled*. The spirit is said to be *shed forth*—poured out, which agrees to sprinkling; but if the water is to be applied only by immersion there is no agreement—there is discord—the witnesses do not agree. We beseech our opposing friends to weigh this important subject well. Men may even delight in discord, but God's works must all harmonize.

Another argument to prove that immersion is the only legal mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, is founded on what is said Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 11, 12, where we are represented as being *buried* with Christ in baptism. Hence it is supposed, that baptism is an emblem or representation of the Saviour's *burial* and *resurrection*.

All will readily admit, that when gospel ordinances are figurative, they represent God's *love* and *mercy*, and not his *angry judgments*. Now, we think that immersion in water, more strikingly represents the fate of the wicked antediluvians, and Pharoah's host, than the *burial* and resurrection of one who was buried in a sepulchre hewn out of a solid rock, and raised by the power of God in great glory. Is not *sprinkling* a more beautiful and striking emblem of God's *love* and *mercy* to fallen man than immersion? See him sprinkle the earth to *refresh* and render it *fruitful*, that the sons of men may be saved from death, and refreshed and comforted while passing through this evil world.—



See him immerse the antediluvians and the proud Egyptians, in his great displeasure for their iniquity ; and then say, is the emblem or representation an appropriate one—one that becomes the wisdom and perfection of Almighty God ? A moment's reflection must convince every impartial person, that Christ's *burial* and resurrection, was never intended to be represented by *immersion* in water. He has instituted a solemn ordinance to commemorate his death, which is never to be lost sight of. The holy eucharist represents Christ's death, and all the *solemn realities* connected with it ; and he expressly says : As oft as ye do this, ye do shew forth my death until I come again.

There is very little resemblance between *burying* a man, and plunging one under the water, and raising him up again hastily ; to bury, means to conceal. Christ was in this respect *buried* ; he was the King of Heaven, the Lord of Life and Glory ; and yet he appeared on earth as a man—as a servant. Thus it may be correctly said that he was *buried* or concealed from the sight of mortals, even while he walked before their eyes. He *was buried in the deep valley of poverty and self-denial* ; and we who profess to be his followers, must be buried with him in that cold, *unfrequented* and *unfashionable* valley of *self-denial and humility*, or we shall never reign with him in heaven. Baptism introduces us legally into Christ's *kingdom*, and by an *unassuming, humble, holy,*

*deeply* mortified life, we are *hid* or *concealed*, or *buried* with our Divine Master. St. Paul says: "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Rom. vi. 6, 7. Again, "For ye are *dead*, and your life is *hid* with Christ in God." Col. iii. 3. The amount is, we are *dead to sin*, and *buried*, or "*hid*," or *concealed* from the eyes of ignorant man. Christ was *buried*, *hid*, *concealed* in his character from the observation of mortals; "*as he is in this world so are we.*" But we are risen with our Saviour in the sight of God, from our *heathen degradation*, (by baptism,) and from *our sinful pollutions*, through the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost, and should therefore walk in newness of life.

Thus spiritual Christians are not only *buried with Christ*, but with him they are also *dead*; dead to *sin*—to the *opinions*—the *frowns or smiles* of dying mortals on earth—dead to this delusive world, with all its pleasing and alluring charms. Yes, we are, or *should be*, "*crucified with Christ.*" It is, however, much more pleasing to our fallen nature, to be *buried* under the water for *a moment*, than to be dead and buried with Christ through life; which it is clearly intimated in the above passages we must be. Of those who are thus spiritually and really buried with Christ, it is said, "*when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye*

*also appear with him in glory.*" Col. iii. 4.—Happy for those who are willing to be buried from the eye of mortals—to be little and unknown among men, until Jesus shall appear in the clouds with power and great glory.

In writing the 6th chapter of his epistle to the Romans, St. Paul's design is not to identify the mode of water baptism; he exhibits a beautiful representation of the death of sin in the heart of the believer, and the resurrection of the soul in the image of God spiritually. If the Apostle means, ver. 6, 7, 8, that the Christian is literally dead, then is *literal burying* by baptism meant; but if he speaks spiritually and asserts that the Christian is dead unto sin; then must the baptism referred to, be considered spiritually also, which must convey the idea of *concealment*—of *self-denial*—of *deep humility*. To prove that this is the Apostle's meaning, we need only refer to Col. ii. 11, 12. "In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

Baptism in this passage is unequivocally called Christ's circumcision. Circumcision elevated the character of the Jews; it raised them above the level of the Gentiles; and they became proud and haughty in consequence of

this elevation of character. But in Christ's kingdom, and among his subjects that unholy principle must be put down. Although baptism does in reality exalt the character of Christians, and place them on a more elevated eminence than their ungodly neighbors, yet they must be *humble*—they must be buried with their Saviour or they cannot be his legitimate followers.

We come now to notice some cases of baptism recorded in the New Testament, where *rationaly speaking* it could not have been administered by immersion.

On the day of Pentecost, the multitude assembled promiscuously; they heard the word preached—were converted to God; and the same day there were three thousand added to the church, and *baptized*. The only water course contiguous to Jerusalem, where this memorable event transpired, is the brook Cedron. Historians inform us that it is a small rivulet, generally dry except in winter. Harmer observes—"It may have frequently appeared strange to many readers, that all the travellers they have consulted, have found the Kidron dry: but it is to be remembered that those who have published such journals, were not in the Holy Land *in winter*."

The Cedron is represented by Calmet and others, as a stream which rises near Jerusalem and falls into the Dead sea; being *entirely dry*, except during the rainy seasons; and then its

waters are *dark and turbid*, as it collects all the wash from the neighboring hills; that when it is swelled by rains, it flows with great rapidity. It is *rationally impossible* that a little brook, generally dry except in the rainy seasons, and when raised by the fall of rains, flows with great velocity, could have afforded facilities for immersing three thousand persons in part of a day. And if there were any reservoirs of water in the city, they were all under the immediate control of those men who had condemned and crucified Christ, and despised his followers.

The company came together composed of strangers and foreigners, as well as citizens of Jerusalem and its vicinity; they could have had no idea of what would occur; under such circumstances it is not *reasonable* to suppose that they were provided with a change of wearing-apparel; and to have immersed three thousand persons—men and women, indiscriminately, without a change of clothes, would have been a very indelicate spectacle for their enemies, or even their friends to behold. My *faith* is not strong enough to believe they were immersed; neither are my reasoning powers sufficiently acute to devise any plan by which they could have been, according to the circumstances, so far as they have been disclosed to us, under which the administrators and subjects were placed.

The following letter was received some time

since. The facts therein stated render the baptism of the three thousand at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost altogether impracticable.

The author of the letter visited Jerusalem, and every part of the Holy Land, nor will any one acquainted with his character, doubt for one moment the truth of his statement.

*My Dear Brother* :—Assuming that the natural supply of water in the vicinity of Jerusalem was, in the days of our Saviour and his Apostles, as it is now, I have no hesitation in saying it would have been impossible to have immersed any person in any natural stream or pond, within twenty miles of the city, which is about the distance to the Jordan. And I see no reason to suppose that the natural supply of water there 1800 years ago was larger than at present. The artificial supply was abundant in large pools inside and outside of the city; and in cisterns under the houses and in the courts of the houses. But it would require faith, indeed, such as might remove mountains, to believe that the Christian converts, in the days of the Apostles, would have been permitted to be baptized in these pools or cisterns, from whence the inhabitants obtained their daily supply of water.

Very truly yours,

J. P. DURBIN.

JOHN HERSEY.

When Cornelius and his friends were converted to God, and had received the Holy Ghost, Peter said, "*can any man forbid water?*" He does not say, can any man prevent us from going to the water to be immersed.

These circumstances alone, are strong and conclusive evidence that the Apostles did not baptize by immersion.

It is not possible that the Israelites in passing over the Red sea could have been immersed.

Respecting this circumstance, Paul says—  
 “Moreover brethren I would not have you ignorant, how that our fathers were under the cloud, and were *all baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. St. Paul unequivocally declares that they were *baptized*, and Moses positively says, that they all passed over on *dry ground*. Exod. xiv. 16, 22, 29. Some learned men of the present day have endeavored to prove that the Israelites were *immersed*. What will not sectarian prejudice do, or rather attempt to do? Surely no man in existence, *under the influence of reason and common sense*, can believe that an individual, or company of men, *ever were or ever can be immersed on dry ground*.

There is an expressive prophecy relative to the Israelites, which has not yet been fulfilled. It points directly to the gospel dispensation; and when that peculiar people shall receive Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and King, they will fully comprehend its import.

“For I will *sprinkle clean water upon you*, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.” Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25.

God will elevate them out of their Jewish kingdom, which only consisted of types and shadows, and has been long since broken to pieces; and he will introduce them into the light and glory of Christ’s gospel kingdom on earth. He will deliver them from their sec-



tarian prejudices, and their moral pollutions; and as an evidence of their separation from their idols and prejudices, and as an emblem of this white robe of righteousness, with which they shall be clothed—their purity of heart—He will *baptize*, or *sprinkle* clean water upon them.

Isaiah, taking a more enlarged view of the gospel dispensation, and the Redeemer's reign on earth, says, "*So shall he sprinkle many nations.*" Isa. lii. 15.

The Lord in mercy *sprinkles* the earth to make it *fruitful*, and to *revive* and *comfort* all who dwell therein. Why should he not *sprinkle* the church, and *pour his spirit* upon her, that she may be rendered *fruitful*; and also *revived* and *comforted*?

There is a beautiful and intimate connection between the volume of nature and the book of revelation; between the work of creation and the work of *redemption*. It must necessarily be so, they are both the production of the same hand.

The writings of any celebrated author can generally be recognized by the language and style of the composition. A man's hand-writing can be identified with almost as much certainty as the features of his face. Almighty God, who is immutable in his character, and glorious in all his perfections, with whom there is no variableness—neither shadow of turning—*immersed* the world in water in his

great displeasure, and for the wickedness of the people. He immersed Pharaoh and his host, and they were all destroyed. The same God *sprinkles* the earth in infinite *mercy* and *love* to the human family.

He *sprinkles* the flowers, and they bloom in incomparable beauty. He sprinkles the grass, and it springs up luxuriantly for the benefit of the beasts of the field, and the herds of the stall. He *sprinkles* the cultivated fields, and they produce a bountiful supply for the wants and comforts of the dependent children of men.

There is a beauty, consistency, uniformity and harmony in all the works of the divine hand, which delight and charm the enlightened, purified and contemplative mind; and constrain dying mortals to love and adore their Great Creator and merciful Redeemer. But where there is discord and incongruity in the practice or theory of any system, natural, moral, or spiritual, it must be imputed to the erring mind, and bungling hand of fallen man.

The gospel is wisely and mercifully adapted to the circumstances and condition of the whole human family; and as God is its author, none of its requisitions are oppressive or unreasonable, which cannot be said, if immersion is the only correct mode of administering the ordinance of baptism.

Would it be reasonable or merciful to compel the natives of Iceland, and the high northern latitudes, where their water is locked up in ice one half the year, to be *immersed*?

Suppose another case, which frequently occurs under our own observations: a man on a sick and dying bed repents and is happily converted to God; but he cannot comply with a positive injunction or ordinance of that Merciful Being who has pardoned his sins at such an unseasonable period. The supposition is neither reasonable nor consistent with the character of Him who has proclaimed his name to be—“*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*”

The necessary conclusion therefore is, that *exclusive* immersion, is neither *reasonable*, nor *merciful*, nor *scriptural*.

In conclusion, we will remark, that our children are entitled to a place in their Redeemer's kingdom, from the highest authority; that *baptism alone* can give them a legal title to that privilege and blessing—that to *sprinkle* or *pour* the water on the subject, is a rational and scriptural mode of administering that ordinance; but immersion is no where forbidden in God's word; consequently, we believe it to be innocent and correct for those who prefer it, as the mode cannot change the character of the ordinance; and God's word expressly says, “let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” “Without charity we are *nothing*.”